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HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Forty-ninth session

ACTION TAKEN ON DECISIONS OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This document provides, in summary form, information on the follow-up by UNHCR on all decisions/conclusions of the forty-eighth session of the Executive Committee that called for specific action to be taken by the High Commissioner. The sections and paragraphs referred to below correspond to those contained in the report of the forty-eighth session of the Executive Committee (A/AC.96/895). Decisions or conclusions requiring action by Governments or other entities, rather than the High Commissioner, are not reported on. To the maximum extent, Executive Committee and Standing Committee documents have been cross-referenced in order to limit the length of the report.

II. ACTION TAKEN

para. 18 General Conclusion on International Protection

(j) Recognizes that countries of asylum carry a heavy burden, including, in particular, developing countries, countries in transition, and countries with limited resources, which, due to their location, host large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers; reiterates in this regard its commitment to uphold the principles of international solidarity and burden-sharing, and calls on Governments, UNHCR and the international community to continue to respond to the assistance needs of refugees until durable solutions are found;

UNHCR action. See: *Overview of UNHCR Activities - 1997-1999* (A/AC.96/900), presented to the forty-ninth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (October 1998).

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(k) Encourages States and UNHCR to continue to promote, where relevant, regional initiatives for refugee protection and durable solutions, and to ensure that regional standards which are developed conform fully with universally recognized standards and respond to particular regional circumstances and protection needs;

UNHCR action: See: *Update on Regional Developments in Central Asia, South West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East* (EC/48/SC/CRP.3) presented to the tenth meeting of the Standing Committee (February 1998); *Update on Regional Developments in Europe* (EC/48/SC/CRP.9 and Corr.1) and *Update on Regional Developments in the former Yugoslavia* (EC/48/SC/CRP.10), presented to the eleventh meeting of the Standing Committee (April 1998); *Update on Developments in the Southern African Region* (EC/48/SC/CRP.23), *Update on Regional Developments in the Central, East and West Africa* (EC/48/SC/CRP.24) and *Update on Developments in the Great Lakes Region of Africa* (EC/48/SC/CRP.25), presented to the twelfth meeting of the Standing Committee (June 1998); *Update on Regional Developments in the Americas* (EC/48/SC/CRP.36) and *Update on Regional Developments in Asia and the Pacific* (EC/48/SC/CRP.37), presented to the thirteenth meeting of the Standing Committee (September/October 1998); and *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (E/1998/7), presented to the 1998 Substantive Session of ECOSOC.

(o) Welcomes the growing number of accessions to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and encourages UNHCR to continue its efforts, in cooperation with interested organizations, to promote further accessions to both instruments, as well as to provide technical and advisory services and training globally, to disseminate information on statelessness and nationality issues, and to further its cooperation with States and other organizations interested in this area;

UNHCR action: See: *Note on International Protection* (EC/48/SC/CRP.27), presented to the twelfth meeting of the Standing Committee (June 1998), and *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (E/1998/7), presented to the 1998 Substantive Session of ECOSOC.

(p) Takes note of the discussions which have taken place on measures to ensure international protection to all who need it, and encourages UNHCR to continue to organize informal consultations, with a view to making further progress in this area, including through exploring the development of guiding principles;

UNHCR action: See: *Progress Report on Informal Consultations on the Provision of International Protection to all who Need it* (EC/48/SC/CRP.32), presented to the twelfth meeting of the Standing Committee (June 1998).

(q) Notes that voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement are the traditional durable solutions for refugees; affirms that voluntary repatriation of refugees is the most preferred solution, when feasible; and calls upon countries of origin, countries of asylum, UNHCR, and the international community to take all necessary measures to enable refugees

to exercise freely their right to return to their homes in safety and dignity;

UNHCR action: See: *Update on Regional Developments in Central Asia, South West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East* (EC/48/SC/CRP.3) presented to the tenth meeting of the Standing Committee (February 1998); *Update on Regional Developments in Europe* (EC/48/SC/CRP.9 and Corr.1) and *Update on Regional Developments in the former Yugoslavia* (EC/48/SC/CRP.10), presented to the eleventh meeting of the Standing Committee (April 1998); *Note on International Protection* (EC/48/SC/CRP.27), *Composite Flows and the Relationship to Refugee Outflows, Including Return of Persons not in Need of International Protection, as well as Facilitation of Return in its Global Dimension* (EC/48/SC/CRP.29), *Update on Developments in the Southern African Region* (EC/48/SC/CRP.23), *Update on Regional Developments in the Central, East and West Africa* (EC/48/SC/CRP.24) and *Update on Developments in the Great Lakes Region of Africa* (EC/48/SC/CRP.25), presented to the twelfth meeting of the Standing Committee (June 1998); *Update on Regional Developments in the Americas* (EC/48/SC/CRP.36) and *Update on Regional Developments in Asia and the Pacific* (EC/48/SC/CRP.37), presented to the thirteenth meeting of the Standing Committee (September/October 1998); and *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (E/1998/7), presented to the 1998 Substantive Session of ECOSOC.

(r) Reaffirms the continuing importance of resettlement as an instrument of protection and burden-sharing and as a durable solution in specific circumstances; encourages all Governments capable of doing so to make efforts to resettle refugees; encourages Governments who have not already done so to join in offering resettlement opportunities to refugees, and requests UNHCR to report on resettlement activities to the forty-ninth session of the Executive Committee;

UNHCR action: See: *Note on Resettlement of Refugees with Special Needs* (EC/48/SC/CRP.28), presented to the twelfth meeting of the Standing Committee (June 1998).

(s) Reaffirms the right of all persons to return to their countries, and the responsibility of States to facilitate the return and reintegration of their nationals; recommends to States that strategies for facilitating the return, in safety and dignity, of persons not in need of international protection be examined within a framework of international cooperation; and encourages UNHCR to continue, in cooperation with other appropriate international organizations, to look into ways in which the return process of individuals, determined through fair and effective procedures not to be in need of international protection, can be facilitated, and to inform the Standing Committee;

UNHCR action: See: *Composite Flows and the Relationship to Refugee Outflows, Including Return of Persons not in Need of International Protection, as well as Facilitation of Return in its Global Dimension* (EC/48/SC/CRP.29) and *Progress Report on Informal Consultations on the Provision of International Protection to all who Need it* (EC/48/SC/CRP.32), presented to the twelfth meeting of the Standing Committee (June 1998).

(t) Reaffirms its Conclusions Nos. 39 (XXXVI), 54 (XXXIX), 60 (XL), 64 (XLI) and 73 (XLIV), and urges States, UNHCR, and other humanitarian organizations, as appropriate, to take all necessary steps to implement these Conclusions, including through recognizing as refugees women whose claims to refugee status are based upon a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons enumerated in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, including persecution through sexual violence or other gender-related persecution; by the integration of activities on behalf of refugee women in every aspect of programme planning and implementation; and by taking action to eliminate incidents of violence against women and girls;

UNHCR action: See: *Progress Report on Refugee Women* (SC/1998/INF.1), presented to the twelfth meeting of the Standing Committee (June 1998), and *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (E/1998/7), presented to the 1998 Substantive Session of ECOSOC.

(u) Notes with satisfaction UNHCR's dissemination and training activities with regard to promoting refugee law and protection principles, and calls upon the High Commissioner to continue to strengthen the Office's refugee law promotion work, with the active support of States and through increased cooperation with non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and other relevant organizations.

UNHCR action: See: *Update on Regional Developments in Central Asia, South West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East* (EC/48/SC/CRP.3), presented to the tenth meeting of the Standing Committee (February 1998); *Staff Training in UNHCR: An Update on Recent Developments* (EC/48/SC/CRP.19), *Update on Regional Developments in Europe* (EC/48/SC/CRP.9 and Corr.1) and *Update on Regional Developments in the former Yugoslavia* (EC/48/SC/CRP.10), presented to the eleventh meeting of the Standing Committee (April 1998); *Update on Developments in the Southern African Region* (EC/48/SC/CRP.23), *Update on Regional Developments in the Central, East and West Africa* (EC/48/SC/CRP.24) and *Update on Developments in the Great Lakes Region of Africa* (EC/48/SC/CRP.25), presented to the twelfth meeting of the Standing Committee (June 1998); *Update on Regional Developments in the Americas* (EC/48/SC/CRP.36) and *Update on Regional Developments in Asia and the Pacific* (EC/48/SC/CRP.37), presented to the thirteenth meeting of the Standing Committee (September/October 1998); and *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (E/1998/7), presented to the 1998 Substantive Session of ECOSOC.

para. 20 Conclusion on Safety of UNHCR Staff and other Humanitarian Personnel

(d)(i) encourages UNHCR to give its fullest attention to the examination and adoption of measures to improve staff safety and security, in cooperation, as necessary, with other relevant international organizations and bodies;

(d)(ii) calls upon the High Commissioner to continue to bring this issue to the attention of the Advisory Committee on Coordination, with a view to drawing up, in consultation with the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator, recommendations on measures to be taken to improve security for the staff of UNHCR and its implementing partners, as well as other of humanitarian personnel.

UNHCR action: See: *Note on Safety of UNHCR Staff* (EC/48/SC/CRP.31), presented to the twelfth meeting of the Standing Committee (June 1998).

para. 21 Conclusion on Refugee Children and Adolescents

(c) Calls upon UNHCR to continue to integrate fully the rights of the child into its policies and programmes; improve its operational methods for assessing the needs of child and adolescent refugees; train its staff and implementing partners accordingly; formulate preventive strategies; and strengthen collaboration with States, UNICEF, WFP, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, ICRC, non-governmental organizations, and other concerned actors;

(d) Calls upon UNHCR to include on the work programme of the Standing Committee in 1998 a report on the implementation of its strategy for follow-up to the Machel Study, with special reference to the establishment of operational performance objectives in respect of refugee children and adolescents and the identification of improvements in staffing, training and budgeting to meet these objectives; and also to report on follow-up of its evaluation of UNHCR programming and protection efforts on behalf of refugee children and adolescents.

UNHCR action: See: *Refugee Children and Adolescents, Including Follow-up to the 1997 Evaluation and Report on Implementation of the Machel Study* (EC/48/SC/CRP.38), presented to the thirteenth meeting of the Standing Committee (September/October 1998), and *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (E/1998/7), presented to the 1998 Substantive Session of ECOSOC.

para. 22 Conclusion on Follow-up to the CIS Conference

(l) Calls on the High Commissioner to continue to cooperate with the International Organization for Migration and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe in coordinating ongoing and future activities in the countries of the CIS, in mobilizing resources in support of these efforts and in steering and monitoring progress through appropriate follow-up mechanisms;

(m) Asks also that the High Commissioner enhance relationships with other key international actors such as the Council of Europe, the European Commission, and other human rights, development and financial institutions, in order better to address the wide-ranging and complex issues in the Programme of Action;

(n) Requests the High Commissioner to keep the Executive Committee informed of measures taken and of progress achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

UNHCR action: See: *Update on Regional Developments in Europe* (EC/48/SC/CRP.9 and Corr.1), presented to the eleventh meeting of the Standing Committee (April 1998), and *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (E/1998/7), presented to the 1998 Substantive Session of ECOSOC.

para. 23 General Decision on Programme, Administrative and Financial Matters

(b) Requests the High Commissioner, within the resources available, to respond flexibly and efficiently to the needs currently indicated under 1998 General and Special Programmes which are tentatively estimated at $ 995.9 million, and to any other new needs that might arise, bearing in mind the Statute of the Office and the priority to be accorded to statutory activities, and the relevant provisions of the Financial Rules for Voluntary Funds;

UNHCR action: See: *Overall Programme and Funding Projections for 1997 and 1998* (EC/48/SC/CRP.4), presented to the tenth meeting of the Standing Committee (February 1998); *Update on Programme and Funding Projections for 1998* (EC/48/SC/CRP.11), presented to the eleventh meeting of the Standing Committee (April 1998); *Update on Programme and Funding Projections for 1998 and Tentative Estimates for the 1999 General Programmes Target* (EC/48/SC/CRP.26), presented to the twelfth meeting of the Standing Committee (June 1998); and *Overview of UNHCR Activities - 1997-1999* (A/AC.96/900) and *Update on UNHCR Programme and Funding Projections for 1998 and 1999* (A/AC.96/900/Add.2), presented to the forty-ninth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (October 1998). See also related documentation: *Report of the Tenth Meeting of the Standing Committee* (A/AC.96/896); *Report of the Eleventh Meeting of the Standing Committee* (A/AC.96/897); *Report of the Twelfth Meeting of the Standing Committee* (A/AC.96/905); and *Report of the Thirteenth Meeting of the Standing Committee* (A/AC.96/909).

(e) Notes the *Report of the Board of Auditors to the General Assembly on the Accounts of the Voluntary Funds administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the year ended 31 December 1996* (A/AC.96/885), the *Report of the ACABQ on UNHCR Activities financed from Voluntary Funds: Report for 1996-1997 and proposed budget for 1998* (A/AC.96/884/Add.3), the *Report of the High Commissioner on the work of the Inspection and Evaluation Service* (A/AC.96/886), and requests to be kept regularly informed on the measures taken to address the recommendations and the observations raised in these various oversight documents, especially as they relate to the implementation of 1998 General and Special Programmes;

UNHCR action: See: *Audit Follow-up: Procurement and Asset Management* (EC/48/SC/CRP.5), presented to the tenth meeting of the Standing Committee (February 1998); *Oversight Issues: Consultants* (EC/48/SC/CRP.14), presented to the eleventh meeting of the Standing Committee (April 1998); *Audit Follow-up: Financial Management and Programme Management* (EC/48/SC/CRP.30), presented to the twelfth meeting of the Standing Committee (June 1998); and *Implementing Partners Compliance with Audit Certification* (EC/48/SC/CRP.41), presented to the thirteenth meeting of the Standing Committee (September/October 1998).

(h) Expresses support for the proposals of UNHCR to improve the audit certification of implementing partners, and asks to be kept informed both on the progress in their implementation and compliance therewith;

UNHCR action: See: *Implementing Partners Compliance with Audit Certification* (EC/48/SC/CRP.41), presented to the thirteenth meeting of the Standing Committee (September/October 1998).

(i) Requests UNHCR to present in the first part of 1998 further proposals to ensure a more appropriate and transparent categorization of expenditure and posts, and, to the extent possible, the harmonization of its budget presentation with that of other relevant United Nations agencies, with a view to seeking the Executive Committee's approval at its next annual session, and subject to such approval, their introduction in the 1999 budgetary documentation for the year 2000;

UNHCR action: See: *Proposal for UNHCR Budget Structure* (EC/48/SC/CRP.43), presented to the thirteenth meeting of the Standing Committee (September/October 1998).

(k) Welcomes progress made on the Project Delphi implementation plan and requests to be kept informed of further action in this regard.

UNHCR action: See: *Update on Project Delphi* (EC/48/SC/CRP.6), presented to the tenth meeting of the Standing Committee (February 1998); *Update on the Change Management Process* (EC/48/SC/CRP.17), presented to the eleventh meeting of the Standing Committee (April 1998); and *Update on Change Management Process* (EC/48/SC/CRP.44), presented to the thirteenth meeting of the Standing Committee (September/October 1998).

para. 24 Decision on Programme of Work of the Standing Committee in 1998

(c) Calls on the Standing Committee to report on its work to the forty-ninth session of the Executive Committee.

UNHCR action: See: ***Report on the Work of the Standing Committee* (A/AC.96/910), submitted to the forty-ninth session of the Executive Committee (October 1998).**